



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

*Federal Building
55 Pleasant Street, Room 352
Concord, New Hampshire 03301*

603/225-1552

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Contact: Thomas P. Colantuono
United States Attorney
Terry L. Ollila
Assistant U.S. Attorney
(603) 225-1552

PENACOOK WOMAN SENTENCED FOR BANK FRAUD

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and Concord Police Chief Jerome Madden report that Patricia Murrey, age 39, of Penacook, New Hampshire, was sentenced to a 30-day term of imprisonment, a 5-month period of home detention and a 3-year period of supervised release following her conviction for bank fraud.

The sentence was the result of an investigation which established that on April 23, 2003, members of the Concord, New Hampshire Police Department were advised by employees of the First Essex Bank on North State Street in Concord, New Hampshire that a known customer, Patricia Murrey, had attempted to pass a counterfeit \$30,000.00 cashier's check on April 19, 2003. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that in January, 2003, Murrey went to the First Essex Bank, opened a checking and savings account and informed the bank's assistant manager that she had inherited thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000.00) from a long lost relative in China. Murrey also indicated that she was scheduled to receive her inheritance within a short period of time and wished to have the inheritance placed in her First Essex accounts. Because the bank manager was skeptical about Murrey's story, Murrey provided her with documentation, including a will, involving the inheritance. The bank manager, in turn, provided the documentation to its security officer, who revealed that the documentation was not legitimate. The bank then contacted Murrey and informed her that it appeared she was the victim of a scam. Murrey informed bank employees that she was not the victim of a scam, that the inheritance was legitimate and that a family attorney had traveled to China and confirmed her inheritance.

A period of approximately 3-months went by before the bank had any additional contact with Murrey. On April 19, 2003, Murrey arrived at First Essex and deposited a cashier's check in the amount of \$30,000.00, drawn on First National Bank, Highland City, Polk County, Florida. Although Murrey wanted to cash the check, she was informed that the check was required to be deposited into her account at First Essex until it cleared. While at First Essex, Murrey informed

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the bank manager that she was scheduled to receive her \$30,000,000.00 inheritance within a short period of time. Murrey also stated that the \$30,000.00 cashier's check was from her father's attorney, Mr. Allen.

Because Murrey deposited the cashier's check on a Saturday, and because her account balance prior to the deposit was less than \$100.00, she was not able to immediately withdraw the funds. Instead, she was informed to return on Wednesday, April 23, 2003, at which time the funds would be available. Following Murrey's departure from First Essex, a bank employee became concerned about the validity of the check and contacted First National Bank, Polk County, Florida. Upon speaking with the accounting department at First National, it was learned that Murrey's cashier's check was counterfeit and that First National had been the victim of numerous, recent counterfeiting schemes. Following Murrey's departure from First Essex, the Concord Police Department was contacted.

On April 23, 2003, Murrey arrived at First Essex in order to attempt to gain access to the \$30,000.00. Members of the Concord Police Department approached her and asked whether they could speak with her privately. Murrey agreed and thereafter engaged in a lengthy conversation with the Concord Police Department. Murrey advised that her grandmother's brother lived in China, died in 1998 and left her an inheritance of \$30,000,000.00. Although Murrey had brothers and sisters, she claimed that she was the sole heir. Murrey also stated that her father's attorney, Mr. Adams, who was a good friend of the family's, traveled to China in February, 2003 and verified the existence of the inheritance. According to Murrey, Mr. Adams loaned her the \$30,000.00 cashier's check until such time as she received her inheritance.

When questioned further, Murrey admitted that she did not obtain the \$30,000.00 from Mr. Adams. Instead, according to Murrey, she received an e-mail from a man in China, Mr. Han To, which asked her for help in getting him out of the country. Han To claimed to know the manager at the China Trust Bank who had \$30,000,000.00 and needed investors. Han To offered Murrey a \$3,000,000.00 cut of the \$30,000,000.00 if she assisted him with getting the money into a United States bank account. During the course of Han To's involvement with Murray, a \$30,000.00 cashier's check was sent to her, which she took and deposited at First Essex Bank. Based upon correspondence with Han To, Murrey was supposed to wire him the \$30,000.00 in three (3) separate Western Union transactions, each for \$10,000.00. During the questioning by the Concord Police Department, Murrey indicated that she believed that the Han To money transfer was a scam.

United States Attorney Colantuono praised the Concord Police Department in their continuing efforts to swiftly investigate financial crimes within the banking community, stating, "Bank fraud such as that perpetrated by Patricia Murrey poses a serious threat to our community because such conduct, if left undeterred, would undermine the financial stability of banking institutions whose existence is central to our daily existence and economic success."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Terry Ollila.